

In Memory of  
U.S. Army Private First Class  
**Albert Bohle**

Selby, South Dakota  
Walworth County

July 29, 1929--October 3, 1951  
Died in an Automobile Accident near Dayton, Ohio



Albert Bohle was born in Selby, South Dakota on July 29, 1929 to Theodore and Lydia Bohle. He had five siblings: a brother, Calvin, and his four sisters, Lea, Elsie, Adeline, and Freda. He grew up and attended school in Selby, South Dakota. After graduating from the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Albert left school to help his family on their farm. Also, he worked at the Lead Gold Mine for a time. He was engaged to Rae Jane Lilyblade, who lived in Lead. Albert was described as easy to get along with, a very hard worker, never in trouble, and very quiet. His hobbies included riding horses and singing.

Albert Bohle enlisted in the "Parachute Troops" of the Army on February 1, 1951. Pfc. Bohle did his basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia. He was then stationed with the 503<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Infantry Regiment at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky where he was further trained as a paratrooper. His family received a letter from him that was mailed the day before he was killed. The following words are taken from his letter:

Sorry I haven't written sooner...I've been pretty busy this weekend getting ready to go to Dayton Ohio on some kind of a demonstration. What it's all about beats me. ....Rumors around are that we're going to make a jump there for some White House wheels....

Well, the weather is getting mighty cold here now. I've been wearing a sweater every morning for the past couple of weeks. Well bye now, the next letter you get will probably be from Dayton....

As it turned out, the 503<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Infantry Regiment was selected to send a group of its best men to Dayton to represent the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division. The group that went to Dayton was supposed to help the Air Force demonstrate the use of a new cargo aircraft. He was part of a four-man jump crew. After their jump, they were returning to their assembly area in the back of a pick-up truck. The truck hit a cement bridge abutment, throwing the men from the vehicle. Pfc. Bohle was taken to a hospital where he died three hours later. He was 22 years old. All four men were killed in the accident.

According to family, the telegram informing them of Albert's death was delivered to Calvin while he was in school. He then had to deliver it to his mother, and the two of them went to tell Albert's father, who was working in the fields.

Albert Bohle was buried with military honors in the Selby cemetery. A soldier from the camp in Kentucky accompanied his body back for burial. At the time of his death, he left behind his parents, his siblings, Calvin, Lea, Elsie, Adeline, and also his fiancée, Rae Jane Lilyblade. He was awarded the National Defense Service Medal.

Harry J. Spaw, who was Pfc. Bohle's commanding officer, wrote a letter to Pfc. Bohle's family after his death, in which he said:

...Albert was one of that small group who are the backbone of the company. Never in trouble, he was a quiet, attentive soldier who could be depended on to develop [sic] into a non-commissioned officer. I wish that I had more of his caliber to work with.

....Perhaps you may feel, in view of Albert's death at the very threshold of manhood, that all the years you spent in bringing him up to be such a fine young man must have been in vain. You must not feel that way. Albert has made a definite contribution even during his short time in the Army....

He ended his letter with these words: "Each one of us will be a better soldier from having known Albert. Thus, even though God has chosen to take Albert from our ranks before the first battle, you must know that he will still be a part of the team wherever Company "B" may be ordered to go in peace or war."

This entry was respectfully submitted by April G. Goodson, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade, Spearfish High School, Spearfish, South Dakota, on July 8, 2004. Information for this entry was provided by American Battle Monuments Commission and Kathy and Calvin Bohle of Selby.

Profile approved by Kathy and Calvin Bohle.